



STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

P.O. BOX 83720
BOISE, IDAHO 83720-0027

TOM LUNA
STATE SUPERINTENDENT
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Idaho State Department of Education

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www.sde.idaho.gov

Media contact:

Melissa McGrath

(208) 332-6818

mrmcgrath@sde.idaho.gov

SUPERINTENDENT LUNA SHOWS SUPPORT FOR NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND REAUTHORIZATION

BOISE – Idaho Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Luna told members of the U.S. Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee on Tuesday that he supports the current legislation to reauthorize No Child Left Behind because it finds the right balance between the state's responsibility and the federal government's role.

Superintendent Luna, who also serves as President Elect of the Council of Chief State School Officers, was one of 10 individuals – and the only state chief – to testify before the committee on Tuesday.

"I applaud the bipartisan effort in the Senate to bring forth a comprehensive reauthorization bill that maintains a meaningful commitment to accountability while promoting greater state and local leadership in K-12 education," Superintendent Luna said. "As Idaho's State Superintendent, I have strongly encouraged reauthorization to transform this law away from a prescriptive one-size-fits-all federal model, to an approach that promotes state and local decision making, while maintaining an unwavering commitment to accountability for all students. Idaho has already moved in this direction by passing comprehensive education reform known as Students Come First that raises academic standards, creates the next generation of assessments, implements a growth model for increased accountability, ties educator evaluations to student achievement, and rewards excellence in the classroom. The Senate HELP Committee now has found the right balance to reauthorize the federal law and give states the higher levels of accountability and flexibility they need to raise student achievement."

The No Child Left Behind Act was initially passed in 2001. It was supposed to be reauthorized four years ago; however, neither Congress nor the Administration had taken action until now. This summer, Idaho became one of the first states to tell U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan it would no longer abide by the outdated provisions in No Child Left Behind and instead move toward a new system of increased accountability based on academic growth, rather than just proficiency – or how many students can pass the test.

Idaho had already taken steps in this direction through Students Come First because these laws put in place a growth model and a system for rewarding Idaho's great teachers, among other changes.

Under the proposed legislation before the U.S. Senate to reauthorize No Child Left Behind, states could move away from an outdated accountability system where 100 percent of schools must meet certain proficiency targets. Instead, every state could develop and implement a high level of accountability that measures academic growth as well as proficiency.

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“The current No Child Left Behind law reminds me of the old Clint Eastwood movie, *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly*. The good is that it created a standards-based system where schools are accountable for every child. The bad is it is a one-size-fits-all model that is difficult to implement in rural states like Idaho. The ugly is the federal government now sets the goal and prescribes the programs we must use to meet that goal. If those programs don’t work, we are held accountable,” Superintendent Luna said to the Senate HELP Committee today. “The new piece of legislation to reauthorize No Child Left Behind keeps the good parts of the law and improves the bad and ugly parts. It moves to a growth model where we can focus on those students who are not on grade level as well as those students who are above grade level.”

Until the law is reauthorized by Congress, Idaho will move forward in applying for a waiver to ensure the state can create its own system of increased accountability and flexibility for all schools as early as next year.

The full Senate HELP Committee hearing, *Beyond NCLB: Views on the Elementary and Secondary Education Reauthorization Act*, is available online at: <http://help.senate.gov/hearings/hearing/?id=5e9041da-5056-9502-5d90-8361a1908701>.

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